Exploratory Research on African-American Youth's Propensity to Join the Military

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14. ABSTRACT *(Maximum 200 words)*:

In this preliminary and mainly qualitative research effort we sought information about factors potentially affecting African-American youth's interest in joining one of the military services after high school. Each of 100 African-American high school juniors and seniors was individually interviewed by a male or female African-American adult whom the students were said to know and like. The interviews were conducted at a large city high school that was mostly Black. While the results of this effort are interesting in their own right, their primary values were to suggest variables to examine in a projected effort to model African-American enlistment propensity.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

African-American	Black	Enlistment	Military
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EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON AFRICAN-AMERICAN YOUTH'S PROPENSITY TO JOIN THE MILITARY

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EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON AFRICAN-AMERICAN YOUTH'S PROPENSITY TO JOIN THE MILITARY

INTRODUCTION

Background

Available information regarding African American youth's propensity to join the military was obtained from several reports. One of these reports was the Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS) 1992 Propensity and Advertising Report (1993). This report stated that

> . . .a steep decline in positive propensity occurred in 1989 and 1990--a period coinciding with the activities of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. This decline in the percentage of male youths expressing positive propensity continued in the 1991 YATS . . . . Indeed, the 1992 YATS results show a general continuation in the decline of male positive enlistment propensity. For the first time in the series, unaided mention of military enlistment significantly declined in the youth in the youngest age category (16-18 year-olds). In some categories, male enlistment propensity in 1992 fell to its lowest aggregate level in the nine years [1984-1992] discussed (1993, pp. xi-xii). More specifically, the decline in African American youth's positive propensity was shown in a table derived from the YATS studies. In this instance, when three ethnic groups (White, Black and Hispanic) were examined, the sharpest decline was in the African American respondents from 53.5% in 1986 and 52.5% in 1989 to 32% in 1993. A sharp drop took place in 1990 which was the period of the Gulf War. Both the White and Hispanic percentages showed much smaller declines (Sollner, undated).

Again citing from 1993 YATS Report, ". . .the 1989 to 1990 drop is important, coinciding with the Gulf War and public concerns that Blacks would be placed in harm's way in disproportionate numbers" (Nieva, 1993, p. 6:5). Based on these studies, the statement of work agreement for the Consortium of Universities and ARI/UDC survey laboratory also provided the background for the present study:

> In order to develop appropriate policies and practices, the Army must maintain an accurate picture of attitudes and beliefs about the army held by soldiers and by civilians critical to enlistment and re-enlistment decision processes. Better methods for surveying Army and civilian youth and key influences of these decision processes need to be developed. Research with minorities and women are especially needed. A drop in recent military enlistment propensity among American youth and the reasons for it have become a high priority research area for Army policy makers.

The Youth Attitude Tracking Survey (YATS) has provided
the military services with information on the
enlistment propensity of youth aged 16-24 for the
military services. However, as a telephone survey, it
may not provide the most accurate estimate of minority
enlistment potential. Furthermore, the YATS data do
not provide paired parental data that would allow
comprehensive modeling of the enlistment decision and
enlistment propensity. Research is under way at ARI to
model propensity and enlistment decision process using
paired youth and parental data. To set the stage for
the validation of the model, we need to develop a
better understanding of the determining propensity
among minority youth.

For this study, the phrase "determinants of Army enlistment
propensity" has been tentatively defined as possible reasons for
enlisting or not enlisting in the Army or a military service.
The listing of reasons that has been developed has been
categorized as positive possible reasons (PPR), neutral possible
reasons (NPR) and negative possible reasons (NgPR).

Research Objective

The objective for this effort was to investigate the
determinants of Army enlistment propensity among African American
high school juniors and seniors.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Hypothesis Formulation

A grounded theory strategy has been used in conducting this
exploratory study because so many possible explanations existed
that might account for the apparent decline in minority
propensity to join the military. Among these explanations were
fear of the unknown--leaving a familiar setting, time commitment
to another option, saleable career and educational benefits, fear
of physical combat, fear of discriminatory treatment and lack of
willingness to face "life after high school" and adult roles in
society. Both in reviewing available literature and in
consulting with various individuals having close contact with
African American youth, no particular explanation or set of
explanations stood out at the beginning of this study.

Briefly noted, "grounded theory. . . is generated from data
rather than being abstract and tentative." It is "developed by:
(1) entering the field work without a hypothesis; (2) describing

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what happens; and (3) formulating explanations as to why it happens on the basis of observations." (Bailey, 1987, p. 54). In other words, the grounded theory strategy typically is used when there is no real directionality to the problem being investigated. The advantage of this strategy is that it allows for a wide range of possibilities to be explored rather than to focus on a limited number in depth. As applied here, tentative explanations were used in structuring the individual interview items and response categories, but no formal statements of theory or supporting hypotheses have been used for this study. This strategy is in marked contrast to a classical theory strategy. The latter makes use of a given social theory or combination of such theories. The investigator examines the propositions afforded by such theories and formulates hypotheses to fit the particular problem to be studied.

Sample

The sample consisted of 100 young African American students, all of whom were enrolled in Anacostia Senior High School in Washington, D.C.[1] The students were between the ages of 15 and 19, and all were either juniors or seniors. Those students who reported that their age on their last birthday was 15 were within two to six weeks of being 16, and all were juniors. The distribution of respondents across the various groupings is shown in Table 1. Table 2 shows the age distribution of the respondents by grade level and gender.

Table 1
Number of Respondents in Categories/Groups (N=100)

| | JUNIORS | | SENIORS | | |
	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL
INTERVIEWER					
1 (Male)	26	8	18	15	67
2 (Female)	9	7	9	8	33
TOTAL	35	15	27	23	100

[1]Two of the students had been noted by an interviewer as being Hispanic-American. Questioning the interviewer revealed that these students identified with the African Americans in the neighborhood in which they lived and viewed themselves as being African American. They were therefore retained in the study.

Table 2
Respondents' Ages by Grade Level and Gender

| | JUNIORS | | SENIORS | | |
	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL
AGE					
15	5	2	1	0	8[2]
16	20	9	2	3	34
17	9	4	8	10	31
18	1	0	13	9	23
19	0	0	3	1	4
TOTAL	35	15	27	23	100

All the 15 and 16 year olds were juniors; all the 18 and 19 year olds were seniors. About one third of the 17 year olds were juniors. Comparisons among age groups on the variables of this study were not attempted because the frequencies in each age group were small.

Table 3 presents information from the short demographic section of the instrument which asked each student to report his/her best subject in school. All the students were volunteers, and there was no difficulty in obtaining the students' participation. No student approached by either of the interviewers refused to participate. In fact, the interviewers found that the students wanted to be interviewed. The interviews took place in Anacostia Senior High School with the full cooperation of both the teachers and the principal. The interviews were completed in the first two weeks of September 1994.

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[2]These 8 respondents were from two to six weeks of their 16th birthday, and a decision was made to retain them in the sample.

Table 3
Best Subject in School by Grade Level and Gender (N=100)

| | JUNIORS | | SENIORS | | |
	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL
BEST SUBJECT IN SCHOOL					
1. Math	19	4	12	5	40
2. English	8	3	5	6	22
3. Sciences	3	2	3	5	13
4. Social Studies	3	0	3	4	10
5. Industrial Arts	0	1	2	1	4
6. Foreign Language	1	1	0	1	3
7. Art	1	0	1	0	2
8. Music	0	0	0	1	1
9. Physical Education	0	0	1	0	1
10. Other	0	4	0	0	4
TOTAL	35	15	27	23	100

Instrument

A semi-structured interview schedule was selected in preference to either a structured interview or a questionnaire (See Appendix). The semi-structured interview allowed for greater spontaneity and latitude of responses on the part of the individual respondents. In addition, the interviewer and the respondent would have the opportunity to engage in a dialogue if the situation warranted it. The semi-structured interview would prevent the respondents from reading and selecting socially

acceptable responses or being cued in a given direction by seeing a set of possible positive or negative responses.

The interview schedule was specially developed for this study.[3] Based on the population to be studied, a short face-to-face interview instrument was developed that basically sought information regarding views of military service as a possible option after graduation from high school. The interview schedule was deliberately designed to be brief but needed to be comprehensive enough to elicit information in several categories that the investigators believed would provide promising leads for future studies as well. Moreover, in order to keep the instrument from looking too formidable to the respondents, possible responses to two significant questions were presented in a non-traditional format. Presenting the possible responses in a compact tabular format made it possible to reduce the number of pages contained in the instrument. In one case, 44 possible responses under three different categories, positive (+), negative (-) and neutral (+/-), were all contained on a single page. This listing was entitled Matrix 1. However, this technique also placed more burden on the interviewers to spot quickly the appropriate/ equivalent response being given by a respondent. The "other" items for each category did allow space for the interviewer to write in a response which could later be recorded for another already stated response if such proved to be necessary. This approach required more training and increased maturity on the part of the interviewers than would be the case with a long listing of responses covering many pages.

In contrast to many survey instruments, the short demographic section was used as a "warm-up" to the interview. For example, in exit polling, candidate preference surveys and marketing surveys, the demographic items are asked last, after the respondent has invested time and interest in the study. However, in this instance, the demographic items provided a good introduction to the first key question, "What are your future plans after graduating from high school?".

Beginning with Item 7, "Now, I want to talk with you about your plans when you finish high school. What do you think you might be doing?", and continuing through Item 18.2, "Is any friend of yours in the Reserves or National Guard?', a deliberate progression was followed to elicit "unaided propensity" or spontaneous responses involving attitudes about the military first, which were then followed up.

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[3]We did not obtain a copy of the YATS instrument until after the research began.

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Procedure

Two pilot studies were carried out to test the Minority Attitude Propensity Survey (MAPS). Ten young people participated in the first pilot study; 30 were included in the second pilot study. The division between juniors and seniors was equal for each pilot study; females comprised approximately one third of each pilot study. Both pilot studies were carried out during the summer of 1994. The interviews took place in high school and recreational facilities in Ward 8 of the city. All of the respondents were volunteers, and all of them were known to the interviewer who was a mature African American male. He also served as an interviewer for the main study.

Based on the two pilot studies, consultations with the interviewer and the ARI scientists, the instrument underwent both substantive and format changes. The revised semi-structured interview schedule (MAPS) has four parts:

> 1. Demographic Variables (DV) -- a brief section dealing with age, gender, employment status and best subject in school.
>
> 2. Future Plans (FP) -- a listing of possible options, in which the idea of joining the military is introduced, and reasons for the particular response(s) given (positive, negative or neutral) are explored.
>
> 3. Familiarity with the Military (FM) -- a section dealing with people whom they might know in the military and with advertising and its appeal.
>
> 4. Interviewer Notes (IN) -- time and date of the interview and attitude of the interviewee as judged by the interviewer.

Two African American interviewers were trained and used for the pilot and main studies. They had both worked with the principal investigator and the co-principal investigator on other projects, and both were known to be acquainted with and trusted by the African American students at the school.[4] For example, some students were worried that they might have to give their Social Security Numbers, and others were concerned about the use of the results. Their trust of and liking for both of the interviewers allowed these fears to be allayed.

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[4] We belief these characteristics are essential for a study of African American youth propensity toward the military to be valid.

All interviews were individual and face-to-face, another essential requirement for securing accurate data from this group. For the two pilot studies, the samples were volunteers. For the main study, the sample again was composed of volunteers, and a certain cachet to participating in the study had developed as well. In short, more students volunteered to participate than were required by the sample size. The interviewing sites for the two pilot studies varied. Recreation sites, school grounds and facilities were used.

For the main study, the interviewing site was the same--the corridor outside of the English classes in a single high school. Classes were in session at the time of the interviews, and the corridor was quiet and empty. The loud speaker system is used to broadcast only in the teaching areas and not in the hallways. Also, the teachers close the doors when they are teaching. The study had the full cooperation of the teachers and other high school staff.

RESULTS

The results for this exploratory study of the propensity of African American youth to enlist in the military, specifically, the Army, are presented in a series of tables (see below). Most of the tables show the results by grade level, gender, and frequencies. Some aggregated frequencies and percentages are noted in the narrative reports of the findings, but (with two exceptions) no other statistical techniques were used because of the small sample sizes and the scattering of the responses to the items in the instrument. The results generally follow in the order in which the items were asked in the interview.

The first major section of the survey ("Future Plans") contained two sets of questions. The first set asked respondents (a) what they thought they would be doing after high school and (b) why they thought they would be doing that. If they said they thought they would enlist in the military (item 7, response alternative 6), they were asked their reasons for saying this (item 10). If they said they thought they would go to college and join ROTC, again they were asked their reasons for saying this (item 11). In either case, the interviewer marked their response(s) in an appropriate column of Matrix 1 (page A-8). The second set of questions was asked of those who, in response to the question about what they would be doing after high school (item 7), said something other than that they would be enlisting in the military or going to college and joining ROTC. These individuals were asked (item 8) whether they had ever thought about the military as an option for themselves after high school; and their responses were recorded in an appropriate column of Matrix 1.

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Table 4 presents the information derived from Item 7. "Now I want to talk with you about your plans for when you finish high school. What do you think you might be doing?" Eleven possible response options were stated. The majority of respondents (f=68, including those whose responses fit into response category 7), made it very clear that their first choice regarding their plans after high school was to go to college. When the responses in category 2, "Go to business school" (f=2), and category 3, "Go to trade school/learn a trade" (f=10), are included and combined with the college responses, 80 respondents reported wanting to pursue some form of postsecondary education. Nine respondents specifically mentioned the military, of whom 6 noted that they planned to "enlist in a military service". Five of the 9 clearly linked postsecondary training and education with the military. One respondent said that he would "enlist in the military if his plans for trade school did not work out." Only 6 respondents specifically mentioned immediately getting a job (response categories 4 and 8).

Table 5 presents the results for the Item 8, "Have you ever thought about active military service as a possible option for yourself after high school?". For this table, there are 91 respondents rather than 100 because the question was not pertinent to them (they had previously stated that they either planned to "enlist in the military" or were planning to "go to college and enroll in the ROTC" thus were asked different follow-up questions.

The 28 students who reported they had considered military service as an option in combination with the 10 students who said, "Not sure", can probably be said to have an open mind towards military service. The remaining 53 who said, "No", did not necessarily show negative propensity. More probably, many of them just may not have thought about the military as an option for themselves.

However, all 100 students were asked the reasons for their responses, including the students who planned to "enlist in the military" after graduation. There were 46 possible responses that the students could make. Matrix 1 (page A-8) had a total of 46 positive, negative and neutral response categories. Nevertheless, only a few of the possible responses showed any clustering of responses. The response category receiving the most positive responses was "educational benefits, e.g., go to college when I get out" (f=26). This response category was followed by "further my educational opportunities right now" (f=6). A check through the individual protocols revealed that there was no overlap in responses among the students. Also, not a single respondent said that the "educational benefits weren't so good anymore". When aggregated together, one third of the respondents noted education benefits or opportunities that show

Table 4
Plans After High School by Grade Level and Gender

	JUNIORS		SENIORS		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL

PLANS AFTER
GRADUATION

	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL
1. Go to college	18	14	18	15	65
2. Go to trade school/ learn a trade	2	1	5	2	10
3. Enlist in a military service	3	0	2	1	6
4. Join the police police force or fire department	2	0	1	2	5
5. Go to college and join ROTC	1	0	0	2	3
6. Go to business Business school	2	0	0	0	2
7. Get a job	0	0	0	1	1
8. Leave town	1	0	0	0	1
9. Not sure/haven't thought about it	6	0	1	0	7
10. Don't want to think about it	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	35	15	27	23	100

parallels to their overwhelming interest in some form of postsecondary education reflected in their future plans.

With regard to other response possibilities, 31 respondents said, "just not interested". All 31 of these respondents noted options involving some form of postsecondary education. Eight students reported "too dangerous", and 6 stated that they had to

"stay with their dependents". Almost no responses involved any relative or friend advising either for or against military service as an option. And only one respondent said anything approximating "fear of the unknown". Finally, no respondent reported "racial discrimination in opportunities", "racial discrimination in assignments", or "reserves called up first".

Table 5
Military as a Possible Option by Grade Level and Gender

| | JUNIORS | | SENIORS | | |
	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL
THE MILITARY AS A POSSIBLE OPTION?					
Yes	10	3	10	5	28
No	15	10	13	15	53
Not sure	6	2	2	0	10
TOTAL	31	15	25	20	91

Table 6 is the outcome of a sequence of four related questions. All four questions are shown below. The table is derived from the response categories of Item 12 of the instrument.

* Item 8. "Have you ever thought about active military service as a possible option for yourself after high school?"

* Item 9. "Could you tell me why you said that?"

* Item 11. Matrix 1 with its listing of possible positive, neutral and negative reasons

* Item 12. "What might make you change your mind?" This was the follow-up to any negative and/or neutral responses (reasons) given to Item 11.

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The responses to Item 12 were recorded on the checklist shown in Table 4. Three possible responses with no frequencies are shown because the investigators contend that the absence of frequencies here are important as well. Students (f=26) who gave positive responses and those who already said they were going to enlist in the military were excluded from this table. Thus the actual number of respondents reporting is below the 100 students comprising the sample, in this instance, 64.

The predominant response was "Nothing could make me change my mind)" (f=36; 58%). As noted earlier, these responses did not necessarily indicate decline in positive propensity but more likely a current commitment to another option, in most instances, going to college. Also, the responses were almost equally divided between gender and grade level. The seniors had a slightly higher number of frequencies than did the juniors. The further postsecondary education theme came in a distant second (f=8; 13.9%) even when several response categories are combined (Better educational benefits"--response alternative 7; "Sending me to college while in service"--response alternative 2; and "Allow me to go to trade school/vocational school"--response alternative 8). No clear pattern for other possible responses emerged.

The responses that no student expressed are also revealing. First, no respondent reported, "less racial discrimination". This was consistent with the finding that no respondent had reported discrimination in assignments or training opportunities to the original questions about the military.

Table 7 presents the results for the first question in the section, Familiarity with Military Service (FM). This question asked the respondents what they saw as being "the primary mission/objective of the military services, e.g., the Army". One respondent gave two answers.

The large majority of the respondents (f=71) clearly knew the traditional time-honored mission of the Army, i.e., "national defense/protect America." Another 13 respondents used a less abstract version of the mission--"carry out wars/fight". However, most respondents clearly did not view the primary mission as "peacekeeping". Only 5 respondents reported this objective as the primary one.

Table 8 presents the results for the 100 respondent reports of self in the ROTC and family and friends in the military. The actual enrollment of respondents in the ROTC program at the high school level is comparatively small (f=14), and most of these are at the junior level (f=10). Thirty-six respondents (more than one third of the sample) reported a family number actively serving in one of the military services, and 28 (more than one-fourth) reported having a friend actively serving in the military.

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Table 6
Responses to "What Might Make You Change Your Mind?" (N=64)

| | JUNIORS | | SENIORS | | |
	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL
1. Nothing	9	7	10	10	36
2. Sending me to college while in service	1	0	2	1	4
3. Not so much discipline	1	0	1	2	4
4. Less danger/risk	0	2	0	1	3
5. If I had more information	1	1	1	0	3
6. Left without any other option	3	0	0	0	3
7. Better educational benefits	1	1	0	0	2
8. Allow me to go to trade/ vocational school	2	0	0	0	2
9. Better fringe benefits--e.g., living quarters	0	0	2	0	2
10. Improved pay	1	0	0	0	1
11. Staying close to my family	0	0	0	1	1
12. Less racial discrimination	0	0	0	0	0
13. A really humanitarian cause	0	0	0	0	0
14. Other	2	1	0	0	3
TOTAL	21	12	16	15	64

We cross-tabulated students' responses to the two questions asking (a) whether any of their family members were actively serving in one of the military services (item 17) and (b) whether they had ever thought about active military service as an option for themselves after they finished high school (item 8). Of the 28 who said they had a family member actively serving in the military, half ($\underline{n}$=14) said they had considered military service

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for themselves, and half ($\underline{n}$=14) said they had not. Of the remaining 53 who said they did not have a family member in active service, fewer than half ($\underline{n}$=16) said said they had considered military service for themselves, and more than half ($\underline{n}$=37) said they had not. This disproportion is not, however, statistically significant ($\underline{X}^2$ (1, $\underline{N}$ = 81) = 3.01, $\underline{p}$ > .05. Data are shown in Table 9.

We also cross-tabulated students' responses to the questions asking (a) whether any friend of theirs was actively serving in the military (item 18) and (b) whether they had ever thought about active military service as an option for them after they finished high school (item 8). Of the 25 who said they had a friend actively serving in the military, two-thirds ($\underline{n}$=15) said they had considered military service for themselves, and one-third ($\underline{n}$=10) said they had not. Of the remaining 58 who said they did not have a friend in active service, fewer than a third ($\underline{n}$=15) said they had considered military service for themselves, and nearly three-fourths ($\underline{n}$=43) said they had not. This disproportion is statistically significant ($\underline{X}^2$ (1, $\underline{N}$ = 81) = 8.37, $\underline{p}$ < .01. Data are shown in Table 10.

Tables 11 and 12 present information regarding the advertising of the Armed Services. Table 11 presents the results for the two lead questions in this area; Table 12 highlights the reasons given in response to a follow-up question. In Table 12, no breakdown by grade level and gender is shown because the frequencies for the 26 possible responses of Matrix 2 (page A-10) were so small. Matrix 2 (page A-10) consisted of a set of possible positive, negative and neutral reasons for answering, "Yes", "No", or "Not sure" to the question on the appeal or interest of this advertising. Also, the frequencies for several possible responses have been combined since they were essentially the same. Only one specific reason, college opportunities, elicited more than 10 responses from the group. All other possible responses had only one or two frequencies, and there were 25 of these.

The students definitely had seen the advertisements; some even repeated the slogan, "Be all that you can be." That only 43 respondents said the advertising did not appeal to them was rather surprising in view of their current plans after high school, given that 80 of them had earlier reported plans for some form of postsecondary education or training. Almost one third of the students said that the advertising did appeal to them which suggests that a positive message is being communicated.

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Table 7
Perceived Primary Mission/Objective of the Military Services by
Grade Level and Gender (N=100)

| | JUNIORS | | SENIORS | | |
	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL
PERCEIVED PRIMARY MISSION					
1. National defense, protect America	25	10	20	16	71
2. Carry out wars, fight	4	3	3	3	13
3. Enforce policies, treaties	5	0	2	1	8
4. Keep the peace, prevent trouble from happening	2	1	1	1	5
5. Professional career for myself	0	1	1	0	2
6. Keep people employed	0	0	1	0	1
7. Good ways to do public service	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	36	15	28	22	101

Table 13 presents selected characteristics of the 9 students who, when asked what they thought they would be doing after high school, said they thought they would enter the military or go to college and join ROTC--a response indicating what is referred to here as "unaided propensity" toward the military. Six of the 9 students said that they would be enlisting in the military upon completing high school. The remaining 3 noted that they planned to "go to college and enroll in ROTC."

Table 8
Self, Family, and Friends Reported to be in the Military or ROTC
by Grade Level and Gender

		JUNIORS		SENIORS		
		Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL

QUESTION ASKED

1. Are you in ROTC?

Yes		7	3	1	3	14
No		28	12	26	20	86

2. Any one in the family
   serving in one of the
   military services?

Yes		13	7	10	6	36
No		22	7	17	16	62

3. Any one in the family
   in the Reserves or
   the National Guard?

Yes		9	1	5	2	17
No		26	14	22	21	83

4. Any friend actively
   serving in the military?

Yes		9	6	6	7	28
No		26	9	21	16	72

5. Any friend in the
   Reserves or National
   Guard?

Yes		8	2	2	4	16
No		26	13	25	19	83
		—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	Yes	46	19	24	22	111
	No	128	55	111	92	386

Table 9
Family Member in Service and Having Ever Considered Active
Service for Yourself

Anyone in Family Actively Serving in the Military?	Ever Thought About Active Military Service for Yourself?		
	YES	NO	TOTAL
YES	14	14	28
NO	16	37	53
TOTAL	30	51	81

$\underline{X}^2$ (1, N=81) = 3.01, $\underline{p}$ < .01

Table 10
Friend(s) in Service and Having Ever Considered Active
Service for Yourself

Any Friend(s) Actively Serving in the Military?	Ever Thought About Active Military Service for Yourself?		
	YES	NO	TOTAL
YES	15	10	25
NO	15	43	58
TOTAL	30	53	83

$\underline{X}^2$ (1, $\underline{N}$=81) = 8.37, $\underline{p}$ < .01

Table 11
Familiarity and Interest in Armed Services Advertising by Grade
Level and Gender

| | JUNIORS | | SENIORS | | |
	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL
QUESTION ASKED					
1. Familiar with Armed Services Advertising?					
Yes	34	15	27	23	99
No	1	0	0	0	1
2. Did advertising appeal or interest?					
Yes	9	3	12	8	32
No	18	9	12	12	51
Not sure	8	3	2	2	15

Of the 9 students, 8 gave more than one reason for being
interested in the military. Their reasons focused primarily on
educational benefits to be derived, learning a saleable
occupation and good pay. Four students reported wanting to
"serve my country". Only one student noted being able to "get
out of the bad environment". In general, these students
spontaneously reported practical and solid benefits to be gained
in joining the military.

Table 14 is based on three items that were filled out after
a respondent had completed an interview. The purpose of these
items was for the interviewer to estimate the attitude of each
respondent to the interview and its contents. Each "attitude"
was rated on a five-point Likert scale. Had any respondent
manifested negative attitudes, that protocol would have been
placed in a separate category for analysis.

Table 12

Reasons for Answering "YES," "NO," and "NOT SURE" Regarding the Appeal of Armed Services Advertising

REASON GIVEN	FREQUENCY OF MENTION

1. Non-specific positive reasons:
    * Very informative
    * Looks interesting
    * Made Me think about it
    * Hype was good
	21

2. Non-specific neutral reasons: * Not my thing	21

3. Non-specific negative reasons:
    * Not interesting/fun
    * No appeal at all
	22

4. Specific reasons:
    * College opportunities
    * Learn a good occupation
	11

The means and the medians of the group indicated that for each of the three items, the 100 respondents were very positive. Also, the interviewers reported that students sometimes thanked them. Both interviewers further reported that the students took the interview seriously and were candid in their responses.

Table 13
Selected Characteristics of Nine Students Who Showed "Unaided Propensity"

Characteristics	Student								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	F
Status	Junior	Junior	Junior	Senior	Junior	Senior	Senior	Senior	Senior
Age	16	17	15+	18	15+	18	19	18	17
Best subject	Math	Math	Foreign Language	Math	English	Industrial Arts	Industrial Arts	English	Sciences
Plans after high school	Enlist in MS	Enlist in MS	College and join ROTC	Enlist in MS	Enlist in MS	Enlist in MS	Enlist in MS	College and Join ROTC	College and join ROTC
Reason(s) for that plan	Serve my country	Serve my country; educational benefits	Work up to being an officer; further educational opportunities	Get out of bad environment; serve my country	Good Pay; fringe benefits	Learn a good salable occupation; educational benefits	Learn discipline/self-respect; serve my country	Work up to being an officer; friends in service recommends it	Good pay; learn a salable occupation
Reaction to Advertising	+; wants to fly plane	+; very informative	+; pay and benefits	+; pay and benefits	-; nothing related to education	+; college or education opportunities	+; very informative commercials	+; leadership opportunities	+; travel and adventure
In H.S. ROTC	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Friends/relatives in service	None	None	Friends	Friends	Friends & relatives	Relative	None	Friends & relatives	None

Table 14
Judged Attitudes of Respondents by Grade Level and Gender

| | JUNIORS | | SENIORS | |
	Male (n=35)	Female (n=15)	Male (n=27)	Female (n=23)
ATTITUDE				
1. Negative to positive				
Mean	4.37	4.53	4.74	4.43
Median	4	5	5	5
2. Bored to Interested				
Mean	4.34	4.06	4.41	4.30
Median	5	4	4	5
3. Inattentive to Attentive				
Mean	4.49	4.60	4.82	4.57
Median	5	5	5	5

DISCUSSION

In considering the results presented in Table 4, an immediate explanation which comes to mind is that the respondents might simply be giving socially acceptable answers to the interviewers. That is, these respondents hear repeatedly about the benefits to be gained from going to college from their teachers, counselors, and principal in the high school. One possibility therefore is that these students were simply giving socially-acceptable answers. Another explanation is that for these students pursuing some form of postsecondary education is, in actuality, a reality-driven choice. This is based on the investigators' own experiences, experiences of the interviewers and the information gathered from this study. In the investigators' opinion, this contention of a reality-driven choice is the more productive explanation.

The respondents clearly understand the importance of math and English for future college work. This is evident from Table 3, showing that students regarded Math and English as their two best subjects, with the sciences and social studies trailing a distant third and fourth, respectively. Anacostia Senior High School is not a strong academic high school in comparison with some of the other senior high schools in Washington, D.C. In discussing these results with the two interviewers regarding a possible "socially acceptable" interpretation once again, neither interviewer thought this was the case. Rather, they suggested that the desire to go to college and the importance of these two subjects in successful college work probably caused the students to concentrate on them. This explanation probably accounted also for the virtual absence of physical education being reported as best subject. These students are well aware that any really lucrative athletic scholarship depends on being a high school "star" in one or more sports. Also, the interviewers knew the respondents well enough to be generally aware of their individual academic performances. Nothing egregious was apparently claimed by any respondent.

1. With regard to Matrix 1: Possible Potential Reasons, 31 respondents who said "just not interested" had also earlier expressed a preference for some form of postsecondary education (Item 7). This suggests that "just not interested" is not really a negative possible reason (NgPR) but, in actuality, a neutral possible reason (NPR). They simply expressed their commitment to another option at the time the interviews were carried out. Thus the statement "just not interested" should not be viewed as a negative possible reason for this sample.

2. With regard to Table 6, "What might make you change your mind?" (A follow-up question used for "neutral"/"negative" reasons recorded on Matrix 1)", no respondent stated "less discrimination." This finding agreed with the earlier findings recorded on Matrix 1: Potential Possible Reasons that no respondent had mentioned discrimination in assignments, promotions or training opportunities. The several responses to response category 13 "Left without any other option", suggested the possibility that for some of these students enlisting in the military might be a possible second option if their first option, usually college, did not work out.

3. The results shown in Tables 7, "Primary mission of the military" and 8, "Self, family and friends in the military/ROTC" suggested that there is a generally clear understanding of the traditional mission of the Army, but little indication that they considered "peacekeeping" a mission. Also, the military service was not an "unknown quantity" to them. However, the actual extent and quality of their knowledge of the military services is still moot.

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4. The findings reported in Table 13 for the group of students who are profiled in the table were in agreement with the findings reported in the "Army Update" (Sollner, undated) in which "money for college", "skill training", and "service to country", were the three most important reasons for enlisting in the military. Clearly, the 9 students profiled in this table had made the linkage that their own personal goals can be realized while serving in the military.

5. In this study (MAPS), the data were collected by interviewers who were known to students, and students volunteered their time for the study. The interviewing was done face-to-face for only a short period of time (approximately 4 to 7 minutes in duration). In YATS, the data were collected via a telephone survey, which was reported to take approximately 30 minutes to complete. MAPS utilized a small sample of urban-based volunteers, ages 16 to 19 years of age; YATS used a large stratified random sample by ethnic groups and geographical region with an age range from 16 to 24 years of age. Moreover, in MAPS, no "prompts" gave any information about the military to the respondents; in the YATS, "prompts" did provide information about the military. In the MAPS study, the findings and conclusions were based on a comparatively small one-time sample. The YATS study was based on a series of samples over time and has produced a longitudinal pattern of results and conclusions.

6. The MAPS study showed a positive propensity on the part of African American youth for some form of postsecondary education combined with a lack of knowledge of educational opportunities afforded by the military. YATS reported fluctuations in positive enlistment propensity for African American youth over a period of time with a pattern of decline.

7. The MAPS study suggests that there is latent goodwill toward the Army in the African American youth population. In addition, the study tentatively concluded that a decline in positive enlistment propensity may be an artifact. The YATS study reported a decline in positive enlistment propensity in the military for African American youths.

8. Data from the two chi square analyses suggest the hypothesis that these students' peers may have more influence on their enlistment decisions than do their family members.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this exploratory study on propensity to join the military services involving 100 African American junior and senior students in Washington, D.C. support the following conclusions:

1. Furthering their education at the postsecondary level was the main theme for the African American students who participated in this study with the main emphasis on "going to college". This theme was reiterated in their responses to future plans, reasons for explaining their reactions to military service as a possible option after high school graduation, and in the extent of the appeal of the advertising they had seen or read. However, their responses regarding education tended to view the possible education benefits that could accrue to them as occurring **after** serving in the Army rather than being able to take place while they were actually in the service. Also, they did not generally view the Army as providing them with the opportunity to learn an interesting and saleable occupation that would be useful in returning to civilian life. They seemed to have missed the direct linkages that are possible between being in military service and being able to accomplish their personal goals.

2. In contrast to the other 91 respondents, the 9 students who demonstrated "unaided positive propensity" for joining a military service noted as their principal reasons: the educational benefits to be derived, the learning of a saleable occupation and serving their country. The direct linkage between being in military service and being able to achieve personal goals was clearly understood.

3. Evidence of what might be described as a kind of latent good will toward the military, and more specifically, the Army, seemed to be demonstrated when some of the findings are aggregated. For example, no expressions of racial discrimination in types of assignments or training opportunities were given by any respondent although items were included in the instrument for such expressions to be recorded. In addition, one third of the students said that they had considered the Army as an option. Moreover, over a third of the students had relatives in service, and a fourth of them reported having a friend in service. Interestingly enough, only one or two of these students mentioned either a friend or a relative advising for or against them considering the military as an option after high school graduation. Based on all of these indicators, we conclude that little, if any, decline in positive enlistment propensity has been demonstrated by this group of young African American students.

4. Of the numerous possible explanations for the decline in positive enlistment propensity on the part of African American juniors and seniors, several of them are not supported by the results of this study. Among the explanations that are not supported are: fear of the unknown, discrimination in education and training opportunities and assignments and diminution of educational benefits. Only a few students said that serving in the military "was too dangerous", suggesting that this explanation may not be that useful in predictive value.

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5. The time-honored, traditional mission, "national defense" and/or carrying out wars", of the Armed Services, specifically, the Army, was clearly understood. However, almost no one noted the emerging and presumably less dangerous mission of peacekeeping, suggesting that this mission of the Army was not salient for the group as a whole.

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APPENDIX

The Survey Instrument

MINORITY ATTITUDE PROPENSITY SURVEY

MAPS

A-3

MINORITY ATTITUDE PROPENSITY SURVEY

(MAPS)

Introduction: I am interviewing for a study being carried out by the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). This study is about you and your views about military service. You do not have to give your name, and you don't have to write anything. Our interview won't take very long. Will you help me out by answering my questions? (*Pause for response.*) That's great.

First, I'll ask a few questions about you. Then, I'll ask for your views/opinions about military service. And last, I'll ask about any contacts you might have with someone in the military services. O.K.? (*Pause for response.*) Let's begin.

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES (DV)

(Note: *Unless otherwise directed, the interviewer should circle the item or number of the response given by the interviewee. Item 1 should be completed by the interviewer without asking any question. Item 2 should only be asked if the interviewer has any doubts about the ethnic group involved.*)

1.   **Gender**:

Male   1

Female 2

2.   **Ethnic group**:

African-American   1

Hispanic/Latino 2

Other 3

3.   **What grade are you in?**

Junior 1

Senior   2

Other (*Write in*) 3

4.   **How old were you on your last birthday?**

15	. . . .	1
16	. . . .	2
17	. . . .	3
18	. . . .	4
19	. . . .	5

5.   **Are you currently employed?**

Yes	. . . .	1
No	. . . .	2

*(If **NO**, skip to item 6. If **YES**, <u>first</u> ask items 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3.)*

5.1   **Is your job**

part-time?	1
more than one part-time?	2
full-time?	3

5.2   **Where?**(*Write in*)   4

5.3   **Is your job**

(*school related skills*)	academic?	1
(*non-school related skills*)	non-academic?	2

6.   **What is your best subject in school?**

English	. . . .	1
Math	. . . .	2
Social Studies	. . . . . .	3
Foreign Language	. . . .	4
Sciences	. . . .	5
Art	. . . .	6
Music	. . . .	7
Physical Education	. . .	8
Industrial Arts	. . . . . .	9
Other (*Write in*)	. . . .	10

FUTURE PLANS (FP)

7. Now, I want to talk with you about your plans for when you finish high school. What do you think you will be doing/what do you think you might be doing? [*Circle the appropriate response(s). For more than one choice, put in rank order by the responses.*]

	Go to college 1
	Go to business school 2
	Go to trade school/learn a trade 3
	Get a job 4
	Leave town 5
Skip to item 10	Enlist in a military service 6
Skip to item 11	Go to college and join the ROTC . . . 7
	Join the police force or fire department 8
	Not sure/Haven't thought about it . . . 9
	Don't want to think about it 10
	Other (*Write in*) 11

8. Have you ever thought about active military service as a possible option for yourself after high school?

> Yes 1
> No 2
> Not sure 3

9. (*For item 8 responses, ask,* Could you tell me why you said that? (*SKIP TO MATRIX 1. Circle appropriate response number(s).*)

10. Tell me your reasons for thinking that you might be enlisting in the military. [*SKIP TO MATRIX 1. Circle appropriate response number(s).*]

11. Tell me your reasons for thinking that you might be going to college and joining the ROTC? (*Circle appropriate response numbers on Matrix 1*)

A-7

+	+ -	-
1. Good pay	1. Something to do until I figure what's next for me	1. Too dangerous, risky; get killed out there
2. Fringe benefits, living quarters, meals	2. Feel like getting away	2. Too much discipline, too rigid; want to be cool/free
3. Learn a good/salable occupation	3. Family responsibilities	3. Minorities get killed first
4. Travel to exotic places, adventure	4. Already have a job lined up	4. Not enough pay for enlisted men/women
5. Learn some discipline, self-respect	5. I'm going to/am already enrolled in college	5. Racial discrimination in training opportunities
6. Meet new people, make new friends	6. Never thought about the military before for me	6. Racial discrimination in assignments
7. Feel a part of something important	7. Don't know what I am going to do	7. My relative (in the service, reserve, National Guard) advised me against it
8. Work my way up to being an officer (OCS)	8. Never given any thought to it/never thought about it	8. Family responsibilities, e.g., has partner and/or dependent children; stay with them
9. A relative (male/female) is pushing me to join up	9. Fully decided on another option at this time, e.g., college or occupation	9. My boyfriend/girlfriend doesn't want me to go into anything military
10. A relative is in the service and really likes it.	10. Maybe when I'm older	10. Disrupt my life--force me into another direction; take something away from me
11. Friend in the service talks highly of it	11. Educational benefits are not that good	11. Reserves called up first for Desert Shield/Desert Storm
12. Educational benefits, e.g., go to college when I get out		12. Boring assignments, no place to go (sitting in the desert)
13 Get out of this bad neighborhood/environment		13. Get sent to awful places, e.g.,desert, Somalia, etc.
14 Positive movie, media, etc. portrayals of the military		14. Just not interested
15 Further my educational opportunities right now		15. Fear of the unknown, e.g., whole idea scares me; know what I've got here
16 Serve my country		16. Don't want to wear a uniform
17. Other (*Write in*) _____ _____	12. Other (*Write in*) _____ _____	17. Other (*Write in*) _____ _____

(*After* the interviewee finishes responding to Matrix 1) **Can you think of any other reasons for your feelings about the military?** [*Use a check (✓) for any additional items noted.*]

Note to interviewer: For an interviewee who has given all positive responses, SKIP TO ITEM 13. Otherwise ask item 12.

12. **You said** . . . (*Repeat a negative or neutral response*). **What might/would make you change your mind?** (*Skip to item 13 for positive responses*).

Nothing 1
Improved pay 2
Better educational benefits 3
Less danger/risk 4
Sending me to college while in the service 5
Better fringe benefits, e.g., living quarters 6
Not so much discipline 7
Less racial discrimination 8
Better opportunities for promotion 9
If I had more information 10
Speaking with recruiters while in high school 11
Staying close to my family; not being separated . . 12
Left without any other option 13
Allow me to go to trade school/vocational school . 14
A really humanitarian cause 15
Other (Write in) 16

FAMILIARITY WITH THE MILITARY SERVICES (FM)

13. **What do you see as the primary mission/objective of the military services, i.e., the Army?**

National defense/protect America 1
Enforce policies/treaties 2
Carry out wars/fight 3
Keep the peace/prevent trouble from happening 4
Good ways to do public service 5
Keep people employed 6
Professional career for myself 7
Other (Write in) 8

14. **Have you seen or read any of the advertising for the Armed Services?**

Yes 1

No 2

(If YES or NOT SURE, ask 14.1 and 15; if NO, SKIP to item 16.)

14.1 **Did it appeal to/interest you?**

Yes 1

No 2

Not sure 3

15. **Why is that?** *(Circle the number(s) of the appropriate response(s) in Matrix 2 below.)*

MATRIX 2

+	+ / -	-
1. Positive presentation on pay and benefits	1. Not my thing	1. Ignore commercials
2. Very informative commercials	2. Only showed commercials for one service	2. Not interesting and fun
3. Travel and adventure	3. Not enough information	3. No appeal at all
4. Stable occupation		4. Boot camp
5. Different saleable trades or skills to be learned		5. Nothing related to education
6. Looks interesting/ made me think about it		6. Army taking control of your life
7. Hype was good		7. Always showed fighting
8. College or education opportunities		8. Too good to be true
9. Leadership opportunities		
10. Public service		
11. Masculine appeal		
12. Good career		
13. Other (write in) _____ _____	4. Other (Write in) _____ _____	9. Other (Write in) _____ _____

16. **Are you in ROTC?**

$$\text{Yes} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 1$$
$$\text{No} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 2$$

17. **Now I want to ask you about any other contacts you might have with someone in the military. Is anyone in your family actively serving in one of the military services/armed forces?**

$$\text{Yes} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 1$$
$$\text{No} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 2$$

(If YES, ask item 17.1 and 17.2; if NO, SKIP to 17.2)

17.1 **Who is it and in what service?** (Write in)

_____

17.2 **Is anyone in your family in the Reserves or in the National Guard?**

$$\text{Yes} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 1$$
$$\text{No} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 2$$

18. **Is any friend of yours actively serving in the military?**

$$\text{Yes} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 1$$
$$\text{No} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 2$$

(If YES, ask item 18.1 and 18.2; if NO, SKIP to 18.2.)

18.1 **Which service is your friend serving in?** (*Write in*)

_____

18.2 **Is any friend of yours in the Reserves or National Guard?**

$$\text{Yes} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 1$$
$$\text{No} \quad \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \quad 2$$

Well, that's all of my questions. Thanks a lot for talking with me. Is there anything else that you want to say? (*If a comment is made, write it down. If not, terminate the interview*). **Again, thanks for your help.**

INTERVIEWER NOTES (IN)

1. Date of Interview _____

2. Place of Interview _____

3. Start Time _____ AM/PM   End Time _____ AM/PM

4. Attitude of interviewee during the interview in general. Please circle the number that best summarizes the interviewee's attitude throughout the interview.

   Negative   1   2   3   4   5   Positive

   Bored   1   2   3   4   5   Interested

   Inattentive 1   2   3   4   5   Attentive

5. Other Comments or Observations

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. Interviewer's Initials _____